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General and complete disarmament: towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda

Letter dated 23 September 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward the communiqué issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the New Agenda Coalition, Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, on 22 September 1999, with regard to sub-item 76 (r) of the agenda of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda".

I would be grateful if the attached communiqué could be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ahmed Aboul **Gheit**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Communiqué issued by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the New Agenda Coalition in New York, on 22 September 1999

A meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden was held on 22 September 1999 to take stock of progress made on their joint initiative, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", as well as to consider future action in the United Nations and other international forums.

The Ministers noted that a degree of complacency had crept into the international push for progress on nuclear disarmament. They examined the contribution that the new agenda had made to refreshing the debate on the nuclear disarmament imperative. They reiterated their concern over the absence of a definitive engagement to embark on a seamless process which could lead to the early elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Ministers considered the further steps they would take to advance the new agenda and the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. They recalled that the resolution they had launched in the General Assembly the previous year had been co-sponsored by 32 delegations and adopted by a large majority in the General Assembly. They noted the positive response to the contribution that the New Agenda Coalition had made at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the co-sponsorship by 44 delegations of their proposals tabled at the session.

The Ministers noted that a fundamental shift in approach was required to push the nuclear disarmament agenda forward. The New Agenda Coalition would continue to urge the five nuclear-weapon States to make an unequivocal undertaking at the highest political level to accomplish the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. This undertaking should be manifested through an accelerated process of negotiations, geared towards achieving nuclear disarmament to which the five nuclear-weapon States are committed under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Ministers also shared their concerns about the effects of events in South Asia on nuclear disarmament. They reiterated their call, in the resolution on the new agenda, upon the three States that are nuclear-weapons capable and have not yet adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to renounce the nuclear weapons option, and to adhere unconditionally and without delay to that Treaty, and to take all of the necessary measures that flow from adherence to that instrument.

The Ministers acknowledged that some progress on nuclear arms reduction was being achieved and that positive steps have been taken by some of the five nuclear-weapon States to enhance strategic stability. They reiterated their call upon the five nuclear-weapon States to take such interim steps as were feasible to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. They considered that this would significantly underpin the process leading to nuclear disarmament.

The Ministers confirmed that a draft resolution will again be tabled in the First Committee of the present General Assembly, the text of which they were submitting to potential co-sponsors.